

REMARKS

Claims 17-20 now standing the application, all earlier claims having been canceled. Reconsideration of the application and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claim 17 is an amended version of previous claim 12, in a way to recite steps which are dependent on the sorting machine and the address recognition processing. The claim recites the physical steps of forming an image, performing OCR, forwarding a mail item toward a sorting output, or after further processing in the event of an ambiguity, forwarding the mail item toward a sorting output. None of these physical steps are in a claim preamble, each an add result in statutory subject matter.

Claim 18 is modeled after claim 13 but is now dependent on claim 17 and is based on page 7, line 26-37 and Fig 4; page 8 line 24-26; page 9 line 1-34.

Claims 19 and 20 correspond to previous claim 16 dependent on each of claims 17 and 18.

Vaghi discloses a process in which postal items are pre sorted based on zip-codes. In paragraph 86, it is stated that this may be performed using conventional mail sorting machines which read address information. Therefore, Vaghi teaches a conventional process where ZIP codes are provided by a non ambiguous recognition of a destination address but does not teach at all steps of :

providing several ambiguous possible delivery points from results of said destination address recognition processing for said current item,

detecting if said ambiguous possible delivery points are included in a single delivery round,

in response to said detection, computing a volume mail data for a delivery range defined by said ambiguous possible delivery points, and

forwarding said current mail item towards a sorting output corresponding to one of said ambiguous possible delivery points if said computed volume mail data is less than a predetermined threshold.

Furthermore, a ZIP code cannot certainly be considered as a delivery round contrary to the statement of the Examiner in the Advisory Action. A ZIP code corresponds to a geographical area (see paragraph 86 of Vaghi) which is used to provide by OCR recognition a delivery point but a delivery round is a list of ordered delivery points used by postman to deliver the postal item in the right mail box.

Therefore, modification of Ross in view of Vaghi does not reach in an obvious manner the method of claim 17.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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CUSTOMER NUMBER

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